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RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE PRIORITY  
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 7181  
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 ISLAMABAD 002654

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CENTCOM FOR ADMIRAL FALLON

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [AF](#) [IN](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR ADMIRAL FALLON'S JUNE 15-17 VISIT  
TO PAKISTAN

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Peter Bodde, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) We look forward to your arrival in Pakistan. As always, your discussions with senior officials will strengthen joint U.S.-Pakistan efforts in the War on Terror. You may also have the opportunity to encourage your military counterparts to support democratization and the protection of human and civil rights. Doing so will reinforce the messages of Deputy Secretary of State Negroponte and Assistant Secretary of State Boucher, both of whom will be in Islamabad

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during your visit.

¶2. (C) You arrive at a time of intense scrutiny of the U.S.-Pakistan relationship, both inside Pakistan and in the international community. The Pakistani press often overlooks positive news about the U.S.-Pakistan relationship and focuses only on perceived U.S. criticism of or distancing from the government. Given the Pakistani media's tendency to focus only on the negative, we endeavor to be exceptionally careful in our public remarks about our relationship with Pakistan and, especially, about Pakistan's contributions to the War on Terror. On issues of democracy and civil rights, however, we believe a more forthright public approach is important at this time. In private, candidly expressing our concerns on both counter-terrorism issues and progress on democratization is both necessary and appropriate.

SECURITY ISSUES

¶3. (S) The security situation in the Northwest continues to deteriorate. Taliban militants, as well as what appear to be criminals calling themselves Taliban, routinely stage attacks, kidnappings, and violent robberies within FATA and in the neighboring settled areas. Newspapers in Peshawar often report death threats against video and music shop

owners as evidence of increased talibanization in FATA and Northwest Frontier Province. Each unsolved murder, bomb blast and threat to local businesses highlights the increasing difficulty of law enforcement to maintain or regain law and order in FATA and surrounding areas.

#### UPDATE ON MAY 14 INCIDENT

14. (C) During a June 13 meeting, Vice Chief of Army Staff GEN Ahsan Saleem Hayat told Assistant Secretary of State Boucher that Pakistan had completed its investigation into the May 14 killing of a U.S. Army officer by a Frontier Corps troop. He said the Pakistan Military was convinced the incident was the result of a lone disgruntled soldier and did not indicate a broader problem. He promised to present a copy of the report to MG Helmley.

#### THE CHIEF JUSTICE CONTROVERSY

15. (C) On March 9, President Musharraf called the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court to his office in the Rawalpindi Garrison, presented a reference (charge sheet) against him, and demanded he resign from office in return for what reportedly was a substantial golden handshake, possibly including an ambassadorship in Europe. The Chief Justice refused and hired a formidable legal team to fight the reference in the Supreme Court. (Note: Musharraf's motives for attempting to oust the Justice remain unclear. The charge sheet involves minor corruption that is still widely practiced in Pakistan. The generally accepted -- though never fully verified -- true motives may have been that Musharraf or someone around him was unnerved by the judicial activism and independence of the Justice. End Note.)

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16. (C) Since March 9, the national bar association, which is the core of civil society in Pakistan, has effectively kept the Chief Justice on the front pages of local newspapers by holding regular anti-Musharraf demonstrations around the country. The government's attempts in early June to clamp down on press freedom were intended to prevent coverage of those demonstrations. The government (and some observers) believed the press was exaggerating the size of rallies and crossing the line from journalism into political activism. That said, most of Musharraf's advisors privately opposed the press crackdown.

17. (C) Musharraf's advisors tell us that he has found the last two months stressful and that the tension has negatively impacted his usually strong political instincts. Advisors cite Musharraf's reactions to the May 12 political violence in Karachi, which took over 45 lives, as both an example of his damaged political touch and of the moment when his political fortunes took a particularly negative turn. Had he apologized to the families of the victims and promised a full investigation into the violence, he likely would have suffered minimal harm that day. Instead, he blamed the deaths on the Chief Justice, a ploy that backfired and caused some of his own party leaders to begin back briefing against his recent decisions.

18. (C) Most of Musharraf's advisors are recommending he either instruct his legal team to stop fighting the multiple procedural motions against the reference and accept defeat graciously or completely withdraw the reference. Doing so would be tantamount to admitting filing the reference was a mistake -- something difficult for Musharraf to acknowledge publicly. Nevertheless, few observers believe Musharraf will win the procedural motions. Musharraf can either lose now and prevent further political damage, or he can lose months from now, after the Supreme Court finishes deliberating the petitions.

#### MUSHARRAF'S LEGACY

¶9. (C) The political problems of the last two months have distracted both domestic and international audiences from Musharraf's significant accomplishments since 1999. Our message to him is that it is not too late to turn attention back to the vision he set for Pakistan when he came to power, but that he must act quickly to put the Chief Justice controversy behind him.

¶10. (C) Musharraf's legacy includes:

--He is the first leader of Pakistan in decades to say "no" to extremism and to roll back the Islamization began under Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and accelerated through the Zia ul Haq years. The passage of the Women's Protection Bill in November 2006 was an important indicator that the country is indeed changing direction.

--Thanks in large part to Musharraf's leadership, Pakistan is closer to an agreement with India on territorial and border issues than perhaps ever in its history. Significantly, Musharraf has brought the Pakistani public along with his proposals on Kashmir and other contentious issues.

--Musharraf has made enormous progress on nuclear material security and security of the nuclear arsenal. More needs to be done, especially on nuclear material security, but he is the first leader in Pakistan's history to pay adequate attention to these issues.

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--Thanks in significant part to sound policies, Pakistan is experiencing an economic boom. A smaller percentage of the population lives below the poverty line than in decades.

--Since Musharraf came to office, press freedom has blossomed. The government's attempts to clamp down on the media in early June were sensational in large part because they were so contrary to Musharraf's previous record.

--The opposition political parties, the legal establishment, and a whole range of NGOs, including human rights NGOs, operate relatively freely.

HOW TO PROTECT THIS LEGACY

¶11. (C) Our message to Musharraf and his government continues to be:

--Fighting al Qaeda and countering the Taliban is in the best long-term interests of Pakistan.

--Progress toward democracy must continue unabated and must be visibly apparent to observers.

--Protection of press freedoms and freedom of assembly is centrally important, especially given the current levels of international press scrutiny.

--Pakistan must deal robustly with law and order issues, including fighting terrorism and extremism; countering corruption at all levels of government; and effectively combating Pakistan's gun culture.

¶12. (C) We look forward to welcoming you.  
BODDE